

The week of May 8-14 marks this year's National Women's Health Week, a weeklong observance and celebration aimed at promoting women's health. National Women's Health Week encourages healthier living and improved physical and mental health for women through healthy dietary habits, physical activity, and regular health checkups and preventive screenings.

There are approximately 153 million women in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 14 percent of women (more than 21.4 million) age 18 and older are in fair or poor health. To make matters worse, the CDC estimates that approximately 16 percent of women under the age of 65 are uninsured. It is clear that we must do more to increase access to, as well as improve the quality of, women's health care services, ranging from adolescent health to reproductive health to healthy aging.

As a nation, it is our responsibility to support the important women that have touched each and every one of our lives. I hope that this year's theme, "It's Your Time," will serve as a motivator for women to take charge of their health, giving it the attention it so deserves. By making their health a priority, leading a healthier lifestyle, and getting screened regularly, women can help lower their risks for certain diseases. Having just celebrated Mother's Day on Sunday, I hope that family members will encourage their mothers and other important women in their lives to take the steps necessary to improve their health and well-being and ensure many more Mother's Day celebrations together.

Last year, I voted for the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*, which includes many important reforms for women's health care. The

*Affordable Care Act*

mandates that insurance policies cover recommended preventive services such as mammograms, colonoscopies, and immunizations without charging deductibles or co-payments, as well as assures women the right to see an OB/GYN without having to first obtain a referral. I have also co-sponsored the

*Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act of 2011*

, which requires that health plans providing medical and surgical benefits cover breast cancer treatment, as well as the

*Mobile Mammography Promotion Act of 2011*

, which makes it easier to operate any highway vehicle designed exclusively to provide mobile mammography services. As a Member of Congress, I pledge to continue working with my colleagues to improve the health and well-being of all women. It is truly your time.